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UCCA BULLETIN



February 2017...Our 77th Year of Service to the Community

UCCA ISSUES STATEMENTS ON THE NOMINATIONS OF REX TILLERSON AS U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE & GOVERNOR NIKKI HALEY AS PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE U.S. TO THE UNITED NATIONS

In anticipation of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) nomination hearings for Rex Tillerson as U.S. Secretary of State and Gov. Nikki Haley as Permanent U.S. Representative to the United Nations, the UCCA prepared statements regarding future relations with Ukraine, as the Ukrainian American community is unfamiliar with their world views. Each member of the SFRC received a copy of the UCCA's statements with a request for the statements to be made part of the official record of the nomination hearing.

The statement for Mr. Rex Tillerson's nomination hearing reads in part: "Mr. Tillerson, distinguished in his business career, has pledged to 'focus on strengthening our alliances, pursuing shared national interests and enhancing the strength, security and sovereignty of the United States.' While we are in full support of a U.S. foreign policy with such a focus, we remain unfamiliar with Mr. Tillerson's geopolitical view of the world, as well as the details of his previous business partnerships with the Russian oil giant Rosneft, currently under sanctions by the United States, Ukraine and the European Union." Questions regarding Russian aggression; their illegal occupation/annexation of Crimea, as it violates Ukraine's territorial integrity; human rights abuses in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine; informational/propaganda warfare; and, NATO were highlighted within the document.

The statement for Governor Haley's nomination reads in part: "As Governor Haley will occupy a central role in the advocating for U.S. geo-strategic interests across the globe, the UCCA respectfully urges that in the course of the confirmation process, the U.S. Senate explore with the governor the non-violability of state borders as a vital component of maintaining the post-WWII collective security model." The UCCA's statement highlighted the Russian Federation's illegal occupation/annexation of Crimea and questions pertaining to Russia's human rights abuses in Crimea, underscoring "the December 19, 2016, the United Nations General Assembly resolution requesting that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights prepare a dedicated thematic report on the situation of human rights in Crimea, including the abuses and practices of discrimination enacted by the Russian Federation against the indigenous Crimean Tatars and their decision to ban the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People."

The UCCA also underscored their cooperation with the Ukrainian World Congress NGO, which maintains active consultative status with ECOSOC in the United Nations. In this capacity, the UCCA seeks to bring to the Security Council's attention the humanitarian catastrophe in Ukrainian territories currently under internationally condemned Russian military occupation. We respectfully call upon Governor Haley to continue to provide American leadership in safeguarding the crucial and vital international principles which define our shared American values, as an unrelenting and aggressive Russia seeks to undermine Ukraine's territorial sovereignty and independence.

UCCA ILLINOIS BRANCH HOSTS "UKRAINIAN UNITY DAY"

On January 22nd, UCCA President Andriy Futey participated in a Ukrainian Unity Day Commemoration organized by UCCA-Illinois Branch, featuring Rep. Peter Roskam (R-IL), former U.S. Ambassador John Herbst, and Ukraine's former Minister of Education, Serhiy Kvit, as well as Ukraine's former Minister of Finance, Natalie Jaresko.



L to R: UCCA Illinois VP M. Farion, former Minister of Finance of Ukraine, Natalie Jaresko



Rep. Peter Roskam (center) receives community award; on his left UCCA President A. Futey and UCCA Illinois Branch President, I. Diaczun.

The event, held at the Ukrainian Cultural Center, was a clear manifestation of unity, underscoring the Ukrainian nation's continued desire for freedom. The packed hall together with the honored guests, including: former Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine, President of NU "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy" Sergey Kvit, former Finance Minister Natalia Jaresko, Consul General of Ukraine in Chicago Larissa Herasko, Congressman Peter Roskam, UCCA President Andriy Futey and former US Ambassador to Ukraine John Herbst participated in the international flash mob "United Ukraine."

ADVOCACY OF UKRAINIAN-AMERICAN ISSUES BEGINS IN EARNEST IN NEW 115TH CONGRESS

On January 3rd all members of the U.S. House of Representatives and a third of the U.S. Senate were sworn-in to the 115th Congress by their respective leaders. The traditional first day of a new congressional session provides a unique opportunity to visit with congressional offices as many of them have Open Houses for their constituents, policy-makers, and guests.

UNIS Director Michael Sawkiw, Jr. attended several swearing-in ceremonies and subsequent receptions including: Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH), co-chair of the Senate Ukraine Caucus; Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL); Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI); Sen. Tim Scott (R-SC); newly-elected Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV); newly-elected Sen. Kamala Harris (D-CA); Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-NY); Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-IL), and newly-elected Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), brother of former Congressional Ukrainian Caucus co-chair Mike Fitzpatrick. While at the receptions, Mr. Sawkiw highlighted the community's concerns regarding assistance to Ukraine; continued sanctions against Russia for its lack of implementation of the Minsk peace accords; the illegal annexation of Crimea and human rights abuses in Crimea and eastern Ukraine; as well as, continued economic assistance to Ukraine. Advocacy of these and other Russia-related issues will be critical during the new 115th Congress and Trump Administration. Also present at various receptions were Sen. Cory Gardner (R-CO); Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX); and, Rep. John Barrasso (R-WY) who UNIS engaged in discussions regarding Ukraine-related concerns.



L to R: UNIS Director M. Sawkiw; newly-elected senator from Nevada, Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV); Omar Hossino, Syrian American Coalition; Senate Ukrainian Caucus co-chair Rob Portman (R-OH) taking the oath by Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito.

With regards to the new Trump Administration and the 115th Congress, UNIS is planning three “Ukrainian Days” events in 2017. Each advocacy event will feature a significant milestone or achievement in our advocacy of Ukrainian American issues. The first “Ukrainian Day” will be held on March 8-9, 2017, commonly known as “Shevchenko Days,” which will include a ceremony at the Taras Shevchenko Memorial in Washington, DC. The March 2017 advocacy event will be a prime opportunity to promote the concerns of the Ukrainian American community to new leadership within Congress, as well as to establish relations with the Trump Administration. The second “Ukrainian Days” advocacy event will be held in June 2017 and will commemorate the 20th anniversary of the formation of the Congressional Ukrainian Caucus. And, the third “Ukrainian Days” advocacy event for 2017 is planned for September and will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the formation of UNIS.

SENATOR MENENDEZ MEETS WITH COMMUNITY LEADERS

Leaders of the Ukrainian American community met with Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ), at his request on January 6th, in his Newark offices.



L to R: V. Rud, R. Lozynskij, Senator Menendez, T. Olexy, M. Smorodsky, and Y. Symczyk.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Ukrainian American community's deep concerns regarding the nomination of Rex Tillerson to be the next U.S. Secretary of State, and the potentially damaging impact his confirmation could have on Ukraine's struggle to maintain its territorial integrity and independence.

UCCA ISSUES 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

In order to inform our membership and interested individuals about the work of the UCCA, the National Office has published its 2016 Annual Report.

The report highlights the efforts of the UCCA in various spheres, such as in enhancing strategic alliances, maintaining an active legislative Advocacy Program, high-level meetings, Uniting our Community, raising awareness of the Holodomor, engaging in social media, to name a few.

To receive a copy of the Annual Report, please contact the National Office either by phone at (212)228-6840 or email at: tology@ucca.org.